However, some of the other articles are nothing more than the expected (and unblushing) record of individual surgical skills much of which has already been published elsewhere. Some of the most interesting material, in fact, derives more from the laboratory and the operating room. Lucy Rorke from Philadelphia always writes an interesting article and here she provides one on the *Classification of Central Nervous System Tumours in Children* and another on the *Relationship of Morphology of Ependymoma in Children to their Prognosis*. Also of interest are articles on *Precocious Puberty of Cerebral origin* (a large cooperative study from Japan) and a chapter on the leptomeningeal dissemination of primary brain tumours in children.

All in all this volume is a useful and readable account of, particularly, the neurosurgical aspects of tumours of the central nervous system in childhood. It provides a simple if expensive access to information for those who have not been able to keep up with the current literature.

RICHARD HAYWARD

Pain and Mobility (*Advances in Pain Research and Therapy, Vol 10*). Edited by Sir John Eccles, M Tiengo, AC Cuello, D Ottoson. (Pp 260; \$79.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1987.

This is a perplexing book. Its subject is "Pain and Mobility" and the preface states that the volume explores physiological and psychological connections between pain and motor activity. The contributions were prepared by participants at an International Conference on Pain and Mobility held in Milan in March 1986 and reflect just that, each chapter being more or less self-contained, with little relationship one to another. Given the purpose of the meeting and the book, readers may be surprised to encounter chapters ranging from chemical aspects (for example endorphins and Substance P; the neuropeptides of the skin) to psychological aspects of pain but without much on mobility, and from mesolimbic pathways modulating nociception in rabbits to a conventional discussion on clinical aspects of cardiac pain. One wonders what cutaneous immunohistochemistry and the differential diagnosis of cardiac pain have to do with mobility?

Notwithstanding the heterogeneous nature of the book, there are some good chapters, for instance that dealing with neuropathies and plexopathies of malignant disease, and a first-class discussion on

mechanisms of exercise-induced muscle pain, which ends with the frank comment that "it is one area of research where personal observations and introspection play an important role alongside experimental studies".

The overall impression is that the authors have merely written about the subjects which interest them and upon which they have worked. This does not necessarily make for a good synthesis, which, other than being merely a record of conference proceedings, should be the aim of a book such as this, and I think this is where the book is unsuccessful. Unfortunately responsibility must fall to some extent upon the editors, who have had various roles. Thus whilst Sir John Eccles and Dr Ottoson have not contributed to any of the chapters themselves, Dr Tiengo has contributed to four chapters and Dr Cuello has written a very good opening chapter on peptide-containing sensory neurons. Surely four editors could have improved on philogosis of muscles, polysynaptic reflex arches, iterative lateral wrist skin stimulation, sensibilisation of nociceptors, and so on?

The customary high standard from Raven Press is maintained, but the publisher's comment on the cover that the book "explores the physiological and psychological connects between pain and motor activity" is, in my opinion, wishful thinking.

GD SCHOTT

The Origins of Modern Psychiatry. Edited by C Thompson. (Pp 279; £29.50.) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1987.

Current interest in the history of psychiatry coincides with a reappraisal of the boundaries of psychiatry, as well as mental health care and provision. In this context it is worth bearing in mind that mental health care is the oldest state supported social service. Not surprisingly therefore the history of psychiatry is attracting the interest of academic sociologists and historians, most of whom are influenced by the French writer Michel Foucault. The absence of a significant contribution from psychiatrists to the history of their discipline is glaringly obvious. *The Origins of Modern Psychiatry* can be seen as a partial attempt to redress the balance. The format of the book consists of a collection of essays written in the period 1856 to 1913 with accompanying commentaries by contemporary experts. The original contributions include those of Connolly, Gull, Hake Tuke, Maudsley, Bleuler and Kraepelin.

The editor in the introduction justifies an historical enquiry "as a method of retaining an appropriate perspective on the current status of the subject and proposed developments". Unfortunately the book rarely measures up to these aims. A concluding chapter by the editor might have helped to draw together the diverse ideas of the original contributors and amplify their current relevance. The commentaries, with few exceptions, are largely uncritical and all too often consist in the predictable "sainting" of ancient luminaries. Many of the original contributions clearly demonstrate how the science of an era is very often rooted in prevailing culture and prejudices. This is no better illustrated than in the essay of Langdon Down, "The Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots", wherein he attempts to construct a causal classification of mental deficiency based upon the best biological theory of the age, namely racial degeneration. No lessons are drawn from this well meaning though misguided essay, the assumption being that science in the late twentieth century is free of all ideological influence. Perhaps what this book illustrates best of all is the limitations to a history of a discipline written by its own practitioners.

RJ DOLAN

Aneurysms Affecting the Nervous System. By Bryce Weir. (Pp 671; £113.00.) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1987.

This is the third book about aneurysms or subarachnoid haemorrhage to be published by a neurosurgeon within the past year. Like the others, Dr Weir's has been very thoroughly researched, and is based on considerable personal experience, extending in this case beyond the clinic and into the experimental laboratory. The emphasis of the book is certainly clinical, but all areas are covered: chapters are included on epidemiology, genetics and associated systemic diseases, on ophthalmology, on physiology and pharmacology of aneurysm rupture, on anatomy, and on vasospasm, on physiology and pharmacology of aneurysm rupture, on anatomy, and on vasospasm. The chapter on physiology is particularly good, and can stand on its own as a useful review of intracranial pressure, cerebral blood flow and metabolism, and the pathophysiology and biochemistry of cerebral ischaemia: workers in the experimental field will notice some very minor errors in the description of techniques. Perhaps most valuable is the discussion of the relationship between delayed